

Voting Buttons in an Outlook Message

To attach voting buttons to an outgoing message, click Options when you bring up the Message form. In the Message Options dialog box, choose Use Voting Buttons. When you do, the default voting possibilities Approve or Reject are filled in. A drop-down list contains two additional possibilities: Yes or No; and Yes, No, or Maybe. You are not limited to the three built-in sets. You can type in any list separated by semicolons.

The incoming message that the voter gets has buttons added and a yellow banner that says Please Respond Using the Buttons Above. When the recipient replies, the person can add a message to his or her vote, and the banner when the message is opened changes to read You Responded *Response on Date/Time*.

Tip: *If recipients read the message in the Preview pane, they will have no indication that it contains voting buttons, so you should add to the message a statement asking the recipients to open the message to vote with the buttons supplied.*

The format of the subject for the response that is sent is *Response: Initial Subject*. For example, if the initial subject was Policy Change, the subject of the response might be Reject: Policy Change.

Here's the kicker that makes voting buttons so nice: If you open a reply to a voting message, then magic happens. Your original message in the Sent Items folder gets a second tab called Tracking where the votes are tallied. This tab also lists all recipients so you can quickly tell who hasn't voted yet.

Note that recipients who have already voted can change their votes by reopening the message they received and clicking a different button – but the tallying mechanism on the initiator's machine counts the last vote received for each voter.

Tip: If you *regularly* conduct multiple-question surveys or elaborate votes, you should consider survey software that uses text-based e-mail, such as EZSurvey (<http://www.raosoft.com/ezsurvey/>).